

board's *function*, however, was soon to change dramatically. In the decade after the Civil War the country, and the state, entered the Industrial Age in earnest. The rapid development of an industrial society, and all of its attendant economic and social problems, caused new demands to be made upon state government. People looked to the state for more and a greater variety of public services—education, public safety, regulating the excesses of a capitalist system. These responsibilities, in turn, meant an expansion of state government—new bureaus and offices, new public institutions—that required public financing. It was not long before the General Assembly looked to this unique body composed of the three ranking executive officials as a handy and responsible agency to superintend the provision of these new services and the raising of capital necessary to put them into place. And so, gradually, the Board of Public Works began to manage not only state investments in a few private companies but the acquisition and construction of considerable amounts and types of public property and the basic fiscal affairs of the state as well.

One of the precursors of this new role of the Board of Public Works occurred in 1866 when the General Assembly, by Acts of 1866, chapter 46, authorized the board to sell the governor's mansion to the U.S. government for an addition to the Naval Academy. With the proceeds from the sale and such other money appropriated by law the board was authorized to "procure, by purchase or otherwise, in the name of the State of Maryland, a lot or parcel of ground in Annapolis, as a site for the future residence of the governor of Maryland, and by erecting buildings and improvements thereon, provide a suitable Mansion and Appurtenances for that purpose." If the board carried out these duties, its minutes, normally quite detailed, do not reflect it.

Aside from the replacement of the governor's mansion, it took several years for new duties to be thrust upon the board, and, for the most part, its focus remained on the internal improvement companies until 1871. Beginning in May of that year the board began to receive a number of offers for the exchange of state bonds for B & O preferred stock, and most of its meetings throughout the next year and a half were devoted to considering and approving these offers. These offers to exchange bonds for railroad stock continued sporadically into 1876, and a sizable amount of preferred stock of the B & O was sold in this manner—most of it through Robert Garrett and Company.<sup>6</sup> In addition to accepting the exchange offers, the board appointed railroad and canal directors, but the total volume of its official business was not very great. From January 1872 until May 1876, in fact, the board dispensed with a secretary, the treasurer acting as secretary pro tem and keeping the handwritten minutes.

In 1875 the Board of Public Works began to get more involved in the construction business. In its 1874 biennial session the General Assembly authorized two large public projects—\$250,000 for the House of Correction at Jessup (still in use) and \$100,000 for a state normal school (now Towson State University). In each case the board was not only involved in the issuance of the bonds to pay for the projects but charged with purchasing the land and constructing the necessary buildings.<sup>7</sup>

The situation with the House of Correction was somewhat unusual. The enabling act provided that the proceeds for the purchase of the land and construction of buildings were to be paid by the treasurer upon warrant of the comptroller to the Board of Public Works and the attorney general, and it appears that all relevant decisions were to be made by the board and the attorney general acting together. This was not true with respect to the normal school, where the attorney general was given no role to play.

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6. The board minutes show exchanges amounting to over \$430,000 being approved in May 1871, mostly to banks. Garrett began making the exchanges in October and soon was the only company interested. Starting in January 1872, the debt traded for the stock was primarily the 5 percent sterling bonds, which were exchanged at the fixed rate of \$4.84 per £.

7. Acts of 1874, chs. 233, 469.